

# 2011-2012 Weekly Field Reports

## Copacabana, King George Island

Volume 17  
February 6, 2012

### Science Report:

1. **Penguins:** The chinstrap penguin chick census occurred on Thursday (2/3). This season the chinstrap penguins fledged an average of 0.95 chicks per nest, equal to the 31-year average.

We conducted our second and final chinstrap penguin diet sample on Tuesday (2/7). The proportion of juvenile krill in the diet was closer to normal; 9% of the krill measured in the samples were juveniles. The adult krill sizes ranged from 36-56 mm and 75% were males.

Four of the five satellite transmitters (PTTs) deployed to examine chinstrap penguin foraging distributions during the chick-rearing stage of the breeding cycle were retrieved on Tuesday (2/7).

2. **Skuas:** The reproductive success of the skua populations in our area continues to decline. Adélie penguins have all fledged, leaving the skuas totally dependent on marine resources to provide for their chicks. These late season failures suggest that food availability in the local marine environment continues to be low. Currently there are only 11 brown skua territories with chicks.
3. **Seals and Whales:** The Copa to Patelnia census on Tuesday (2/7) yielded 523 juvenile/unknown elephant seals and 644 fur seals.

Whale observations decreased a bit this week with only two sightings. Two humpback whales were observed entering the bay on Monday (2/6) and one humpback whale was seen breaching off of Uchatka point on Tuesday (2/7).

### Weather:

The weather from Monday (2/6) to Wednesday (2/8) was calm, sunny and beautiful. Thursday morning (2/9) the weather changed to rain and strong winds, blowing up to 25-30 mph. This continued until Friday morning (2/10), when the wind decreased but the rain continued. Our break from the wind was short-lived, as on Friday evening (2/10) the wind picked back up and blew 25-30 mph until late Saturday night (2/11). Sunday morning (2/12) was calm and sunny for most of the day until the evening, when the wind increased to 15-20 mph. Temperatures ranged from 34-41° F.



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### Other Camp News:

Feather samples from 20 chinstrap penguin fledglings were collected on Tuesday (2/7) for Mike Polito's PhD project.

We began putting a new coat of paint on the hut, during the calm, sunny stretch at the beginning of the week.

The 2011-12 Copa Field Team  
Penny Chilton, Field Team Leader  
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